

# CRYPTOCORYNE BECKETTII (ARACEAE), A NEW AQUATIC PLANT IN TEXAS

David J. Rosen

*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Galveston District, P.O. Box 1229  
Galveston, TX 77553, U.S.A.*

The genus *Cryptocoryne* Fisch. ex Wydl. comprises approximately 50 species distributed on islands and coastal areas of South East Asia (Mühlberg 1982). *Cryptocoryne beckettii* Thw. ex R. Trim., a native of Sri Lanka (Mühlberg 1982), was collected in 1996 in the San Marcos River in the City of San Marcos. This taxon has not been previously reported in Texas according to Jones et al. (1997), Hatch et al. (1990), and Correll and Johnston (1970). Large, naturalized colonies of *C. beckettii* were observed growing in open shallow riffles as well as in shaded deep pools. *Cryptocoryne beckettii* is a valued aquarium plant collected in the wild and widely exported (Nicolson 1987). The occurrence of this species in the San Marcos River is likely due to escape from cultivation or dumping of aquariums as has been proposed for the introduced aquatic fern *Ceratopteris thalictroides* by Hannan (1969). A description of *C. beckettii* modified from Nicolson (1987) and illustration (Fig. 1) follow.

***Cryptocoryne beckettii*** Thw. ex R. Trim. J. Bot. 23:269. 1885.

Perennial, rhizomatous emergent-submerged herbs. Leaves basal with elongate, sheathing petioles to 15 cm; blades glabrous, ovate to narrowly ovate, 3–9(–13) cm long, (1–)1.5–3.5(–4) cm wide, upper surface green to dark green to brown and marbled to red-brown, lower surface red-tinged to more or less brownish or green; veins usually conspicuously red; apex acute to acuminate; base obtuse to cordate, margin entire, sometimes undulate; submerged specimens mostly with larger, thinner leaves, often brownish marbled. Inflorescence (not seen) short peduncled; spathe 4–12(–20) cm long, limb greenish brown, narrowly ovate, 0.5–1.2 cm wide, 1.5–3 cm long, twisted, upright to somewhat recurved and twisted; spadix 1.0 cm long.

There are three closely related species, *C. walkeri* Schott, *C. wendtii* de Wit, and *C. undulata* Wendt. A key to separate the four taxa can be found in Nicolson (1987).

Voucher specimen: **TEXAS. Hays Co.:** San Marcos River, exposed bottom across from sewage treatment plant, 08 Aug 1996, *Rosen 202* (SAT, SWT).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Don Bryne (Suwannee Labs, Florida) for his determination of the *Cryptocoryne* material to species and Collete Jacono (USGS) for her enthusiasm and assistance. Thanks are expressed to Stanley D. Jones and two reviewers for their helpful comments.

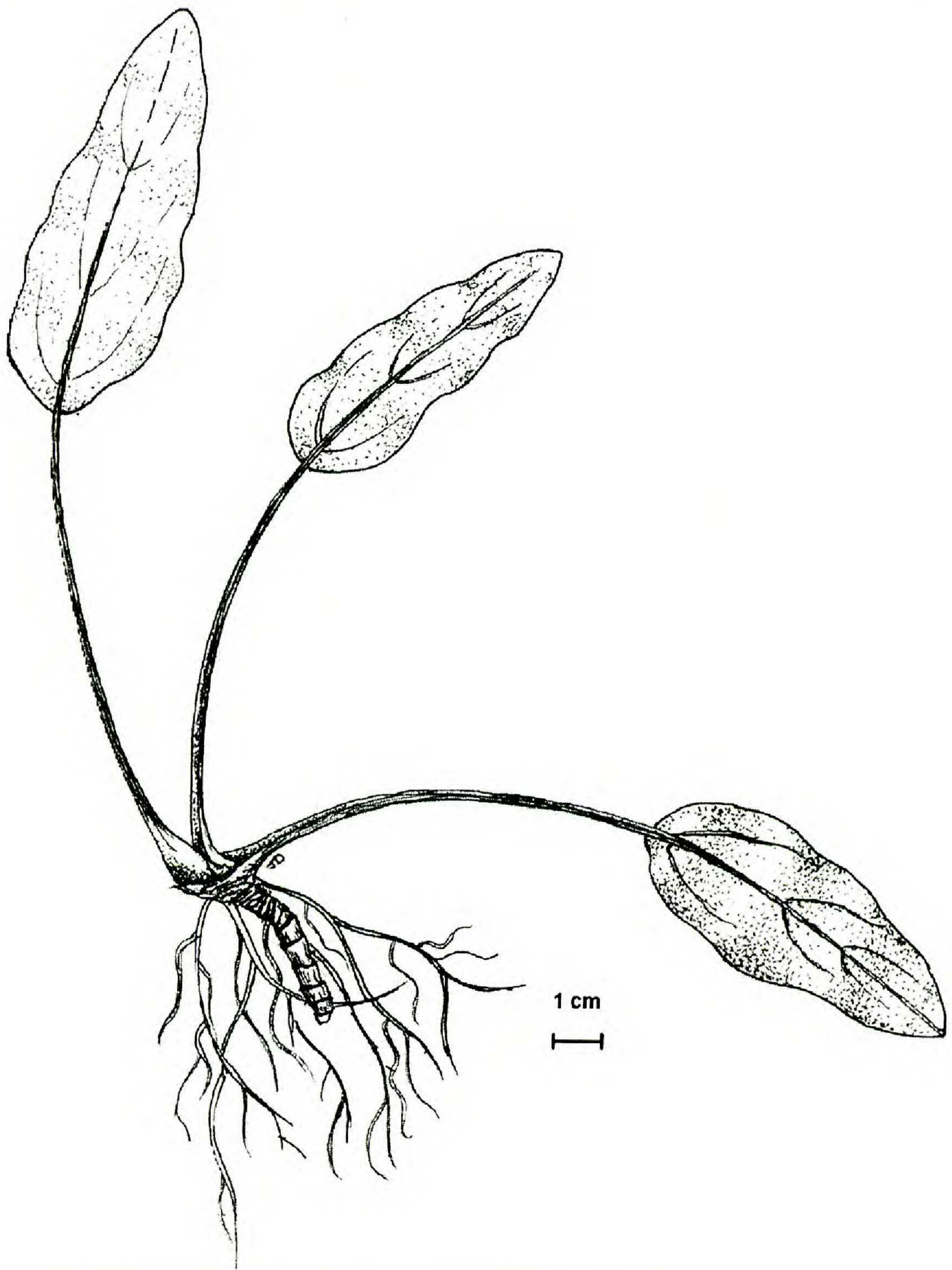


FIG. 1. *Cryptocoryne beckettii* (Drawn by J.E. Dawson III from herbarium specimen).

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